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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 5 July 1994, at 3 p.m.

President:	Mr. BUTLER	(Australia)
later:	Mr. BOTEZ (Vice-President)	(Romania)

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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (continued) (A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91, E/1994/34, Parts I, II and III, E/1994/35, E/1994/64 and Add.1 and 2, E/1994/84, E/1994/93)

Mr. THABIT (Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)) said that he wished to stress the importance of the role which the regional commissions could play in the preparation of country strategy notes because of their familiarity with the problems of regions and countries. ECA, for example, had a network of subregional offices which could assist States in the preparation of country strategy notes. Coordination was needed between resident coordinators and regional commissions for that purpose. That issue had been raised with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and ECA had received a very positive response; it looked forward to achieving coordination in practice.

Mrs. ROUCHET (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that she agreed with the representative of Colombia that the country strategy note could only be a means of achieving a synergy of the contributions of all bodies and funds to the economic and social development of States. The preparation of a country strategy note was not simply a bureaucratic exercise: the political will of the recipient State was essential; however, not all States had shown an interest in having country strategy notes. Ukraine had expressed the wish to have both a country strategy note and an integrated approach carried out by the resident coordinator with a round table of donors and specialized agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions. UNESCO supported both the resident coordinator system and the integrated approach. However, a real effort was needed to achieve bilateral partnerships between international institutions

and funds; she agreed with the representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) that more could be done in that respect.

UNESCO had always been in favour of national execution. Paragraph 64 of the report of the Secretary-General (E/1994/64), referring to the reluctance of specialized agencies to be involved in operations for which they were not the executing agency, was somewhat negative in that respect.

The comments on evaluation in paragraphs 83 to 85 should not be applied only to members of the Joint Conservative Group on Policy (JCGP); UNESCO followed the same principles for monitoring and evaluation. Similarly, paragraph 66 applied to non-JCGP members too.

Mrs. AL-AWADHI (Kuwait), referring to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit contained in document A/49/133, said that she wished to highlight the importance of the role of the UNDP resident coordinator, who was responsible for coordination at the level of specialized agencies and should therefore have all possible resources from UNDP, the specialized agencies and the Governments concerned in order to perform that function. Her delegation was not in favour of establishing a single "United Nations Office" in recipient countries because that would hinder the work of the resident coordinator at both the international and national levels.

At the level of the Ministry of Planning, Kuwait assessed its technical needs from specialized agencies in cooperation with the UNDP resident representative and within the framework of Kuwait's five-year plan. That approach had been agreed upon many years previously, and made possible more direct contact with specialized agencies. There could otherwise be a risk of duplication of efforts and scattering of resources at a time of financial difficulty for Governments and specialized agencies.

Her delegation was in favour of Option A described in paragraphs 28 to 33 of the report as long as it accorded with the goal of facilitating technical cooperation in the interests of recipient Governments.

Ms. BEKELE (World Health Organization (WHO)) said that WHO agreed that the preparation of country strategy notes must be country-based, country-

driven, and in many cases within the purview of the national plan of action, and must take into account the macroeconomic aspects of development. The Observer for Sweden had suggested that the country strategy note could be an antidote to fragmentation; if that proved to be the case, WHO would very much support it.

The Observer for Algeria had asked, at the previous meeting, what views the specialized agencies had on national execution; WHO had had a policy of national execution from the outset; it did not "assist" countries, but supported them in pursuing agreed goals and strategies at the government level.

WHO was very conscious of the critical role of the recipient country and encouraged ministries of health to work with ministries of planning and financing and other authorities and development partners. It was countries themselves that executed health programmes and evaluated them. The Global Strategy for Health for All by the Year 2000 had been developed by and for countries with the help of WHO.

WHO had no difficulty with the resident coordinator system but agreed with the representative of UNESCO that the report of the Secretary-General was a little too negative in that respect. The specialized agencies were all trying to work very closely with resident coordinators; for example, in the joint and co-sponsored programme on HIV/AIDS, leadership at the country level was clearly vested in the resident coordinator. One aspect of the resident coordinator system was the quality of coordinators; WHO agreed that it was necessary to broaden the base for selection. It believed that the system should be strengthened at the country level so that scarce human and financial resources could best be used by developing countries for the advancement of human and economic development.

Mr. NAADJIE (Ghana) said that concepts like the programme approach and national execution were being used by specialized agencies, recipient Governments and the donor community but they were still far from clearly understood and, therefore, were not being rigorously applied. There was a

need for effective harmonization between the mandates of specialized agencies and regional needs; country development goals would be needed to establish some harmony among the players. He wondered what the prospects were of achieving such harmonization before the triennial policy review.

Mr. BARNETT (United Kingdom) said that there appeared to be a lack of agreement on a clear division of labour among agencies of the United Nations system based on their mandates and comparative advantages. Perhaps representatives of the specialized agencies and funds could explain why there were differing perceptions of the level of coordination and what could be done to bridge the gap so that everyone would be working in the direction of greater coordination.

Mr. BRUN (Norway) said that he agreed with the representative of the United Kingdom that there seemed to be a discrepancy between the United Nations view of coordination and reports received from the field level.

There was no doubt that, with the new country strategy note, significant progress was being made, and that great emphasis was being placed on information sharing at the field level. However, tnere had been less progress in the division of labour between funds, programmes and agencies and in identifying areas for greater collaboration between agencies. The Council had a strong role to play in that respect. Before the next triennial policy review, the Council should determine whether there was actually a need for new modalities to further country level coordination. Three areas should be reviewed. First, regarding the authority of resident coordinators, since coordination could not be forced, the main role of the resident coordinators was that of facilitator; at the same time, major programme initiatives should be carefully reviewed prior to being approved so as to ensure that they were, in fact, closely linked to the country strategy note and were indeed furthering coordination, without imposing an extra level of bureaucracy at the field level or encroaching on the identity of other funds and programmes. Second, resource needs should be reviewed and, if it was determined that resident coordinators needed support in terms of staff, technical backstopping

and financial resources, increased resources should be made available. Third, if it was found that there was a need for a substantially higher level of resources to finance the resident coordinator system, methods should be found of sharing and recovering costs from the entire United Nations system, since the resident coordinators provided essential services to the entire United Nations system.

Miss DIOP (Senegal) said that the representative of UNICEF had indicated that agencies, funds and programmes were experiencing difficulties in implementing the provisions of General Assembly resolution 47/199 at the field level. It was therefore very important to ask the agencies, funds and programmes to indicate exactly what they were doing to implement that resolution and what they proposed in terms of follow-up at the time of the triennial policy review, for while everyone talked about coordination, there was chaos at the field level. Resource management also needed to be reviewed; it seemed that far too much was being spent on travel.

Mr. MADDHEUS (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said, in response to the representative of Pakistan, that UNDP felt that there was nothing in General Assembly resolution 47/199 that was not relevant at the field level. However, several provisions were complex in terms of application. UNDP alone had over 130 offices scattered all over the world and it was a major task to ensure that the same policy was applied uniformly. There were some 35 institutions in the United Nations system, all with a network of offices. It was true that there was still much to be done in eliminating variations in the interpretation of mandates and ensuring a division of labour at the country level. At the same time, the concerns of governing bodies should be better understood and other bodies should stick to their respective mandates. In response to the representative of Norway, he did not feel that new modalities were needed; it would be better to try to make the existing modalities work more effectively.

It had been pointed out that the resident coordinator had access only to the resources of UNDP; he agreed that that was not desirable for the system as

a whole or for UNDP, and that a more satisfactory funding mechanism was needed for the resident coordinator system. The Administrator of UNDP had recently received authority from the Executive Board to create a $2 million facility in support of resident coordinators; those funds would be used in consultation with partners at the country level. UNDP hoped that other partners would contribute funds to support that activity.

On the question raised by the representative of Ghana, he felt that a good start had been made in harmonizing the understanding of concepts; in the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), there were system-wide agreements on the programme approach and national execution; there were divergences in application, but UNDP was working to eliminate them within CCPOQ and JCGP.

Mr. RAO (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) agreed with the analysis of the representative of UNDP regarding the remarks of the United Kingdom and Norway. Coordination could be simple or complex, according to how it was defined and what was expected of it. The United Kingdom had rightly noted the dichotomy between the analyses of coordination presented in United Nations meetings and those reflected in reports from Member States. But these were, in fact, two different things. For coordination to be achieved, there was a need for progress at three levels: process, content, and impact on coordination. On the level of process, there was a need for instruments and mechanisms of coordination. The country strategy note promised better mechanisms of coordination, and the field-level committees had also shown great improvement. On the level of content, there was a need for progress in the area of substance or programmes. So far, there had been integration between sectoral and national programmes, but United Nations programmes had not been well-coordinated with those of government agencies. On the level of impact, there was a need for a framework and a common commitment. If the United Nations used the country strategy note as a framework, the position of resident coordinator could be strengthened, and greater progress could be achieved before the next triennial policy review.

Mr. ALTESMAN (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that an attempt was being made to move from a single resident coordinator to a resident coordinator system. It would then be possible to depend on a system of capacities and resources, rather than on an individual, in mobilizing coordination on the country level. UNICEF took seriously the provision in resolution 47/199 regarding the establishment of field-level committees under the resident coordinator. Those committees should focus on specific themes and should form thematic subgroups chaired by the best-qualified individuals under the authority of the resident coordinator. There was a need to strengthen such team efforts.

With regard to the remarks of the representative of Senegal, he felt that 90 per cent of the elements of resolution 47/199 were excellent, although he saw room for improvement in one area. While the resolution made frequent reference to the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP), he pointed out that the United Nations specialized agencies could be of greater use, especially where the formulation of strategy was concerned.

Mrs. VASISHT (India) requested information on the authorship, and greater detail concerning, the Global Strategy for Health for All mentioned by the representative of the World Health Organization (WHO). The WHO representative had also mentioned the role of the resident coordinator in the joint and co-sponsored programme on AIDS. She wondered whether the co-sponsors had a clear image of the lines of authority in this programme. She agreed with the remarks of the representatives of the United Kingdom and Norway and shared the representative of Senegal's surprise at the remark that portions of the General Assembly resolution 47/199 were irrelevant.

Mr. ELMOAKAF (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) supported the remarks of the earlier speakers and stressed the importance of the resident coordinator in Libya, pointing out that his country's foreign ministry already included officials working with the resident coordinator.

Mr. HORIGUCHI (Japan) stated that his delegation was aware of the difference between the rosy picture painted by the United Nations and the

situation reported by national embassies. Either United Nations Headquarters had not been informed of the actual situation, or it was hiding facts from the Member States for its own reasons. Agencies might be reluctant to tackle difficult issues out of fear that interest in coordination would soon be lost. ECOSOC must continue to display its concern for coordination.

Miss POLLACK (United States of America) noted that while resolution 47/199 delegated great authority to JCGP and CCPOQ, there had been difficulties incorporating the work of technical agencies. She wondered how effective the current mechanisms were for large-scale coordination at the agency level and how best to enhance this effectiveness.

Mr. LUNDBORG (Observer for Sweden) said that while he had received reports similar to those mentioned by the representatives of Norway and the United Kingdom, in the last year, those reports had become more positive due to improved coordination and an increased role of the resident coordinator system. He felt that it was easy to see problems and to miss progress. He agreed with the representative of Norway that resources were a central issue. Enormous demands were placed on the UNDP resident representative, who was also the resident coordinator. At its recent meeting in Geneva, the Executive Board had discussed the issue of how UNDP could become a real partner with recipient Governments. He felt that the UNDP representative should indeed be the resident coordinator at the field level, but it was important to recognize the magnitude of demands on the resident coordinator, not only from the Economic and Social Council and on the country level, but also from the Secretariat. He stressed the importance of States responsibilities and the necessity of their financial contributions. The disappointing level of the UNDP budget would have to be discussed at the next triennial review. Perhaps different agencies should participate to a greater degree on the level of financing. In addition to the importance of the thematic groups, mentioned by UNICEF, contact should be made with the specialized agencies, the World Bank, international bodies, and bilateral donors, who could be invited to participate if they had an interest in a given theme. He agreed with the

representative of the United States that it was very important to discuss global strategies, but he felt that it was particularly difficult to coordinate country level activities. The issue of HIV and AIDS was an example of the need for a link between global and country-level strategy.

Mr. HAEMMERLI (Observer for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD)), commenting on the apparent discrepancy between the United Nations assessment of situational coordination and that expressed in document E/1994/64, agreed that paragraph 81 might be too negative. It had been based on limited information provided by the reports of the resident coordinator and an ad hoc survey conducted by mail. Nevertheless, he felt that it highlighted some of the issues raised in paragraphs 40-41 of resolution 47/199. Paragraphs 70 and following of E/1994/64 dealt with the narrow issue of whether coordination arrangements had been established by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). He cautioned against reading too much into that section. Considerable momentum had been generated since the 1990-92 report. There was a need for a systematic training support programme, and this was not an easy enterprise.

CCPOQ was the United Nations system body which must consider the implementation of resolution 47/199. To the extent that ACC was seized by the General Assembly with matters concerning the triennial review, CCPOQ was the appropriate body to deal with this. Considerable time had been devoted to the matter, both in the formal CCPOQ meetings and in working groups. CCPOQ had a standing agenda item concerning the implementation of resolution 47/199. JCGP had originally been an informal gathering, but had become more structured over the years. Its focus was on operation in the field at the country level. While resolution 47/199 referred primarily to JCGP, it had always been understood that CCPOQ and ACC were also relevant and should also be involved.

With regard to the question of the resident coordinator, it was clear that the available resources were not sufficient. However, the real problem lay in the consistency of approach. Larger countries had formed ad hoc, country-specific solutions to problems. Those experiences must now be

assessed to see whether they could be used on a more systematic basis. The office of resident coordinator had become a system-wide concern. Good models were available in Pakistan and elsewhere.

Ms. MESA (World Food Programme (WFP)), in response to the representative of Sweden's question on the coordination of humanitarian assistance, said that JCGP had considered the matter and had agreed that the resident coordinator would normally coordinate humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system at the country level, that a multi-layered structure should be avoided and that the comparative strengths of specific lead agencies should be taken into account.

Mr. MADDHEWS (United Nations Development Programme), referring to the comment made by the representative of India at the previous meeting, said that UNDP would be prepared to hold consultations prior to the triennial policy review, principally through the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) and JCGP.

Ms. JANJUA (Pakistan) pointed out that according to General Assembly resolution 47/199, the country strategy note was to be prepared and owned by recipient Governments. Concerning the resident coordinator system, while it was necessary to enlarge the pool of professionals from whom coordinators were recruited, the resolution should not be re-interpreted. The resident coordinator was to be answerable to UNDP which would also make available the necessary resources; that would address the issue of accountability and avoid the creation of additional layers of bureaucracy. Any need to change the current system could be addressed during the triennial policy review in 1995. All that needed to be done currently was to review the implementation of resolution 47/199. With regard to field-level committees, while it was useful to have coordination at the field level, her delegation was concerned that the creation of additional layers of bureaucracy and the subsequent endless discussions and seminars on thematic approaches to coordination might result in no concrete action being taken by the executing agencies.

Ms. BEKELE (World Health Organization), referring to questions raised by the representative of India on the evaluation of the Global Strategy for Health for All by the Year 2000, said that WHO had been making vigorous efforts to implement a bottom-up approach. The decisions made by the World Health Assembly were transmitted to the regional level and subsequently to the country level where individual countries were required to set up and evaluate their own programmes. The document on the Global Strategy for Health for All indicated that for the second review covering the period 1985-1990, 150 out of 168 countries had submitted reports covering 5,200 million people - 96 per cent of the world's population.

Mr. BARNETT (United Kingdom), referring to paragraph 39 of General Assembly resolution 47/199 on the strengthening of the resident coordinator system, said that while some of the targets such as the widening of the pool of qualified development professionals had been achieved, some of the other crucial issues like the updated guidelines for the resident coordinator were lagging far behind schedule. In that connection, he wondered whether all the provisions of paragraphs 39(a) to (g) were likely to be implemented by 1995.

Mr. Botez (Vice-President) took the Chair.

Mr. HEIN (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that while some progress had been made in a number of areas, more attention should be focused on the training of field coordination teams. His organization remained strongly committed to collaborating closely with other agencies within the resident coordinator system, but felt that it might be advisable at some stage to consider widening the pool to other agencies.

Miss DIOP (Senegal), reacting to the comments of the WHO representative regarding the joint and co-sponsored programme on HIV/AIDS, said that the question which had been raised in that regard was very pertinent because that programme had been established taking into account the lack of policy coordination among United Nations agencies in the field in the area of AIDS. She felt that the programme should be linked to the system of resident coordinators. Since WHO was the lead agency, it was its duty to indicate how

the joint co-sponsored programme fitted in with the resident coordinator system. In Africa, for example, that programme had not been implemented at all and it had not been designed to fit in with the current resident coordinator system.

Ms. BEKELE (World Health Organization) said that while at the field level WHO anticipated that the resident coordinator would be responsible for leadership among the programmes involved, her organization would provide the necessary technical advice and expertise. As far as the HIV/AIDS programme was concerned she felt that it would be advisable to wait until the background documents containing the agreement of all the Executive Boards of the agencies concerned came out in order to have a more realistic basis for discussions.

Mr. HAEMMERLI (Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development), replying to the question put by the representative of the United Kingdom, said that he hoped that by the time the report was prepared for the 1995 triennial policy review, the Secretariat would be in a position to provide answers to a number of issues that had been raised under paragraph 39 of resolution 47/199.

Mr. BARNETT (United Kingdom) said that while decentralization was not an issue which could be very easily handled by the United Nations system as a whole if the objective of a more integrated approach at a field level was to be achieved, the Council should move towards a system where similar levels of responsibility were devolved to the field level and, in cases of those agencies that were not represented in the field, a much more expeditious process of approval of projects and programmes than was currently the case. His delegation would therefore welcome any comments on the bottlenecks with regard to progress towards decentralization and closer joint programming.

Mr. Butler (President) resumed the Chair.

Mr. HAEMMERLI (Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development), reacting to the comment of the representative of Pakistan on the country strategy note, said that it had been made very clear to all parties

concerned that the country strategy note was a government document and that it was up to each Government to decide whether or not to proceed with the country strategy note. It had also been stressed that the United Nations system was led by the resident coordinator at the field level. Concerning the United Kingdom delegation's comments on decentralization, while the matter was in the purview of agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, the Secretariat had tried to provide some summary information on actions taken by the United Nations system in document E/1994/64/Add.1. The subject had also been discussed at the level of CCPOQ.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.